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SUBJECT: SOMALIA: TFG DCM PLEADS FOR ROBUST INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC AND SECURITY RESPONSE

REF: ADDIS ABABA 854

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

1. (S/NF) Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Deputy Chief of Mission in Addis Ababa Jibril Osman offered a bleak assessment of current developments in Somalia, describing an almost unbridgeable rift between President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein Adde, the TFG as without support, the Ethiopian "containment strategy" as unsustainable, and Al-Shabaab and affiliated extremists as formidable and biding their time for a return to power. Nonetheless, Osman stopped short of saying Ethiopia would pull out of Somalia in the next few months and pleaded for the international community to provide a robust security and economic response to the Somali crisis, which he said is the only way to forestall a TFG collapse and to defeat the extremists. Osman's views on the urgent need for a robust international response and the precariousness of the TFG's situation track with views and information we are receiving from other sources, including former TFG Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union Abdi Karin Farah (with whom the Ambassador spoke on April 10), Puntland President Mohamud Musse Hersi and former Transitional National Government Prime Minister and former TFG Minister Hassan Abshir Farah (with whom the Ambassador spoke to separately on April 9 (to be reported by septels), and a non-governmental source that reports increased refugee flows out of Somalia (even directly into Ethiopia). End Summary.

Yusuf/Nur Adde Split

2. (S/NF) TFG DCM Jibril Osman met Deputy Political-Economic Counselor on April 9 to discuss recent developments in Somalia. DCM Osman described almost unbridgeable divisions between President Yusuf and Prime Minister Nur Adde on the balance between security and reconciliation. Osman said the frequent contacts between Nur Adde and Sheik Shariff and/or Al-Shabaab elements do not produce realistic deliverables because the extremists brook no compromise and the only deliverable the extremists call for is "get the Ethiopians out." According to Osman, when Nur Adde relays the disposition of his contacts to Yusuf, Nur Adde says "These people (Al-Shabaab and others) are not extremists. They are Somalis like us and they are with us." The extremists'

near-term goal, Osman said, is to stall progress in Somalia until there is a new administration in Washington, with an aim to eventually toppling the TFG. Nur Adde himself is compromised because he is from the same sub-clan as Shariff, Osman added, noting that he had heard that as of April 9 Nur Adde was in Djibouti for further consultations with Al-Shabaab and other extremist elements.

Yusuf: Gedi-Up?

13. (S/NF) President Yusuf remains open to reconciliation with moderates, Osman insisted, adding that Nur Adde is well-meaning but naive to think that anything can be gained by endless dialogue with extremists. "Yusuf is willing to compromise," Osman said, "provided his legacy is not handing power to Al-Shabaab." Osman said Yusuf has lamented more than once "I should have given (former Prime Minister) Gedi more time." The Ethiopians, Osman said, may even be contemplating a way to engineer Gedi's return. (NB: Osman's negative characterization of Nur Adde's reconciliation efforts places him squarely in Yusuf's camp, but only last week Osman was more laudatory of Nur Adde in an impromptu meeting with a visiting delegation from Washington (REF A)).
END NOTE.

Ethiopia to TFG: "Get Your (Act) Together"

14. (S/NF) Osman said that Ethiopia continues to support the TFG but is dismayed by rampant corruption and incompetence in President Yusuf's administration. Yusuf, in turn, "can't hear the criticism because of age and fidelity to the people

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who work for him." However, Osman said, the Ethiopians have told the TFG in no uncertain terms "get your (act) together - we're not going to be (in Somalia) forever." Osman said that he doesn't think that Ethiopia will quit Somalia this year ("that would be a big surprise") because it still "cannot risk the TFG's collapse." However, Osman said, Ethiopia is pursuing an unsustainable "containment" strategy of training TFG security services and supporting the TFG with Ethiopia's meager resources, but "Ethiopia doesn't have much more left to give." Osman projected the end game as (i) either increasing Ethiopian and TFG dissatisfaction, followed by a precipitous collapse, or (ii) Nur Adde reversing course and recognizing the TFG's legitimate security concerns and recalibrating the balance between reconciliation and security. Osman was pessimistic about the latter option. Asked what would happen if Ethiopia were to pull out of Somalia, Osman said "within one hour the entire TFG and its supporters will resettle in Gode (Ethiopia), and the Ethiopians will build a nice camp for us there."

Frustration With The International Community

15. (S/NF) Osman railed against Italian and European efforts to support Nur Adde's reconciliation agenda as counterproductive, saying they are designed deliberately to undermine the TFG. What Somalia needs, Osman said, is a well-positioned, well-financed and uncompromising security program, packaged with health and education programs, that opens the door to serious business investment. Osman pleaded for a robust, comprehensive international response to Somalia that would provide Somalis visible signs of economic opportunity. Were such a response to emerge, Osman expressed supreme confidence that Somalis by and large would reject the extremists. Osman said that if such a response is not delivered soon and Somalia stays on its current trajectory, "Al-Shabaab will take over."

16. (S/NF) Noting that Djibouti has just appointed a new ambassador to Ethiopia, accredited to the African Union, Osman said that he projects the TFG will have greater

difficulty winning AU support for its initiatives going forward. Osman said the ambassador, whom he expected to arrive in Addis Ababa on or about April 19, had been present at the Eldoret Somali reconciliation talks and was anti-TFG.

"The TFG Has No Support"

¶7. (S/NF) "The TFG has no support in Somalia," Osman said, adding, "We can't get support if we can't give the community anything and we are paralyzed by bickering and back-stabbing." In contrast, Osman said Al-Shabaab has support "everywhere" in Somalia, including in Somaliland and Puntland, and has particularly strong ties to the Mogadishu business community who "owe their livelihoods to Al-Shabaab. With money and power at their disposal, Osman added, the extremists are well-placed to influence clan elders whose loyalty is "always for sale."

Meanwhile, Fighting Continues...

¶8. (S/NF) Osman said that he had heard of fierce intra-Hawiye fighting on the outskirts of Mogadishu between Abgal and Murosade sub-clans, on or about April 7-8, which he attributed to "revenge killings." He said that he also had learned that Al-Shabaab elements had captured Doyale, in the Hiram region, uncontested with 20 technical vehicles. "The Ethiopians did nothing," Osman lamented.

Comment

¶9. (S/NF) Osman's views on the urgent need for a robust international response and the precariousness of the TFG's situation track with views and information we are receiving from other sources. Former TFG Ambassador to Ethiopia and the African Union Abdi Karin Farah (with whom the Ambassador spoke on April 10), Puntland President Mohamud Musse Hersi and former Transitional National Government Prime Minister and former TFG Minister Hassan Abshir Farah (with whom the

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Ambassador spoke to separately on April 9 (to be reported by septels) all were decidedly pessimistic about the TFG's long-term prospects in absence of significant international support immediately. A non-governmental source told us on April 11 that the organization is tracking increased refugee flows out of Somalia to Djibouti, Kenya and even directly into Ethiopia. Somali refugees in Ethiopia is particularly notable and may indicate a significant deterioration in conditions in Somalia, the source said, because until now refugees have avoided crossing into Ethiopia's Somali region due to counterinsurgency operations there. End Comment.
YAMAMOTO